## Data Science for Economists

Julian Hinz & Irene lodice

**Bielefeld University** 

- Data science skills complementary to standard econometrics
- Data cleaning and wrangling, visualization, databases, machine learning, etc.
- Research in (broadly defined) International Economics shifts towards empirics
  - $\rightarrow\,$  We never had this course but wish did.

## WHO WE ARE

#### WHO YOU ARE

#### NAME / PROGRAM / CODING BACKGROUND

#### Today's Roadmap

- Course overview
- Course logistics

## COURSE OVERVIEW

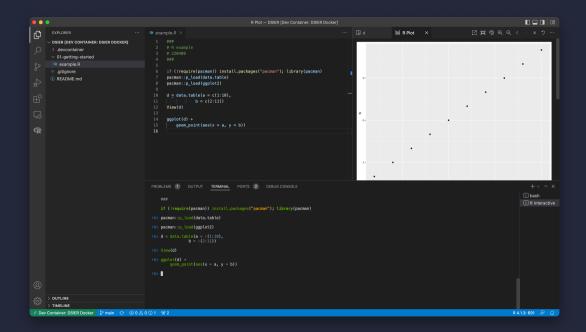


# GETTING STARTED – COURSE OUTLOOK AND GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE

#### Week 1: Getting started

Good research practice, this afternoon:

- Reproducibility
- Versioning, Containerization and IDE
  - $\rightarrow\,$  (Short) introduction to Git, Docker and VSCode
- Set up machine



## THE TOOLKIT – R AND THE SHELL

#### Week 2: The toolkit — R and the shell

- R basics, 'data.table', 'tidyverse' and 'ggplot2'
- Basic helpful shell commands
- Make and more git

#### WEB SCRAPING AND APIS

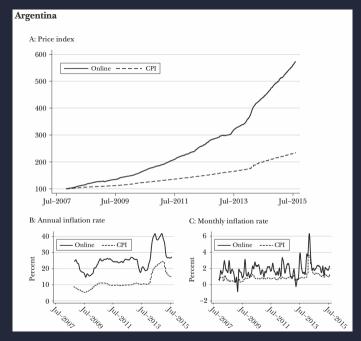
#### Week 3: Web scraping and APIs

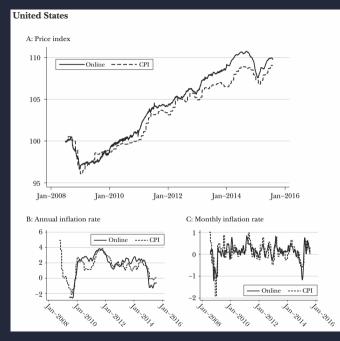
#### Extracting data from a website

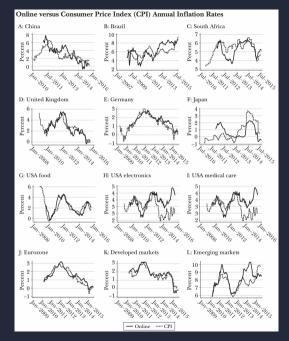
- Get the files for the website from a server
  - $\rightarrow \text{ API}$
  - ightarrow requests, web scraping
- Parse those files (CSS, HTML)

#### Week 3: Web scraping and APIs

- "One Billion Prices Project": Web-scraped prices for many stores and countries (Rigobon et al., 2016)
- Are online prices different than offline prices?
- Are reported CPIs still "true" today?







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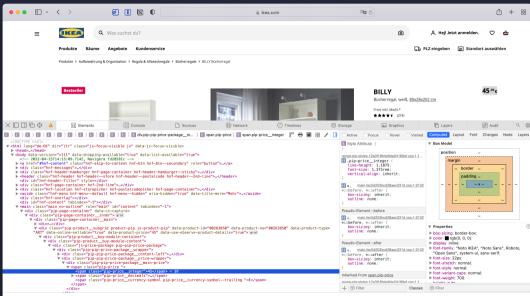
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## SOCIAL MEDIA DATA





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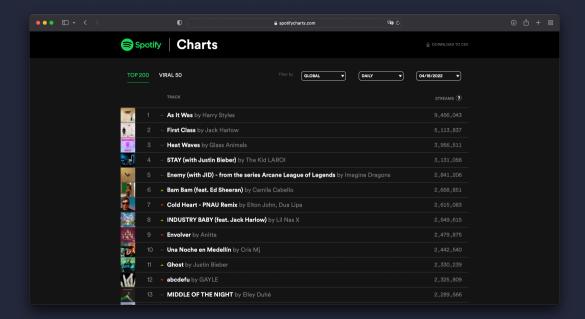
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• Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Spotify, ...

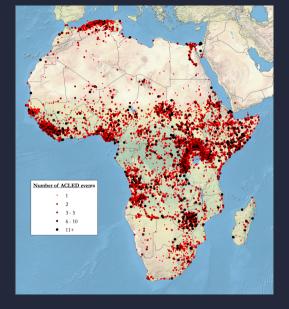
 $\rightarrow\,$  Hausmann & Hinz (2017), Bailey et al (2018), ...

• Human-recorded data: (Often) actual humans recording/being recorded what they see, think, listen to, where they are, who they are with, *en masse* 

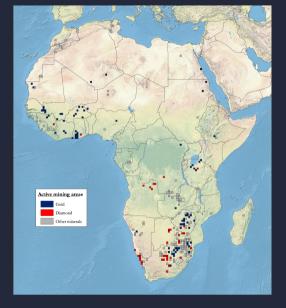


## EVENT AND SENSOR DATA

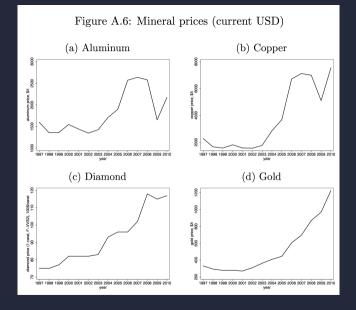
- Event data is any data that you want to measure about an event
- Sensor data is the output of a device that detects and responds to some type of input from the physical environment.
- Overview of the instruments to tackle counterfactual analysis



Source: Berman et al. (2017)



Source: Berman et al. (2017)

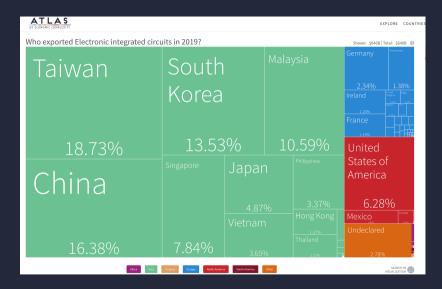


Source: Berman et al. (2017)

Berman et al. (2017): "This Mine is Mine! How Minerals Fuel Conflicts in Africa"

- Geolocalized data on conflict events in African countries between 1997–2010
- Geolocalized data on mining extraction of 14 minerals (Raw Material Data)
- Mining activity increases the incidence of conflicts at the local level
- then spreads violence across territory and time

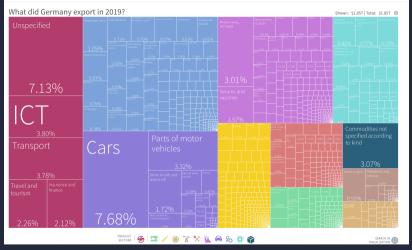
## NETWORKS



Browse more products here: https://atlas.cid.harvard.edu/

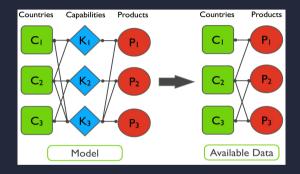


EXPLORE COUNTRIE



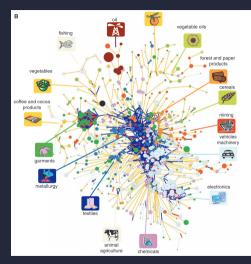
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#### Week 6: Trade network



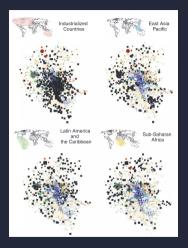
Source: Hidalgo et al. (2009)

#### Week 6: The Product Space of Trade



Source: Hidalgo et al. (2007)

#### Week 6: Countries in the Product Space



Source: Hidalgo et al. (2007)

#### Week 6: A glance at BACI

> library(vroom)
> vroom("~/data/BACI\_HS12/BACI\_HS12\_Y2012\_V202102.csv.gz") %>% head()
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Delimiter: ","
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dbl (5): t, i, j, v, q # -> year, imp. ID, exp. ID, value, quantity
# A tibble: 6 × 6
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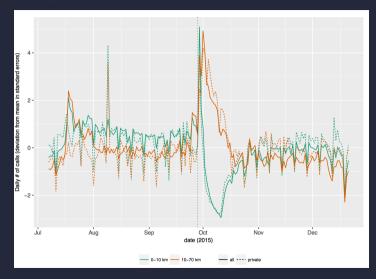
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- 1. How to handle trade data as a network
- 2. Which are useful metrics to capture country's performance from what they export?

# WEEK 7

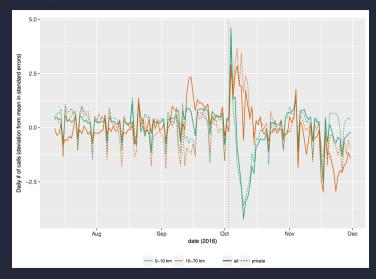
# SPATIAL DATA

### Week 7: Calls in Afghanistan



Source: Blumenstock et al. (2012)

#### Week 7: Calls in Afghanistan

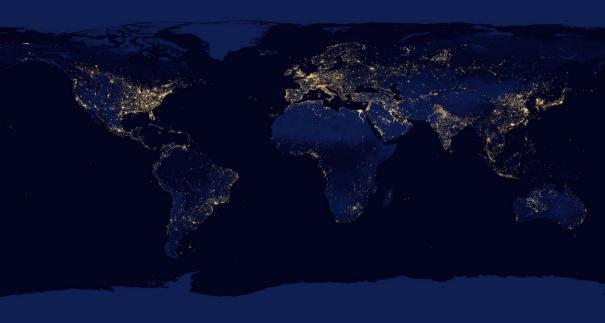


#### Source: Blumenstock et al. (2012)

- Working definition: Units indexed time and space
- Call Detail Records
  - ightarrow Blumentock et al. (2012): Firm activity after terror incidents
  - ightarrow Ehrlich et al. (2018, 2020): Real life connections in urban environments
- many other spatial data: Taxi Rides, AIS data, ...

# WEEK 8

# SATELLITE IMAGERY













































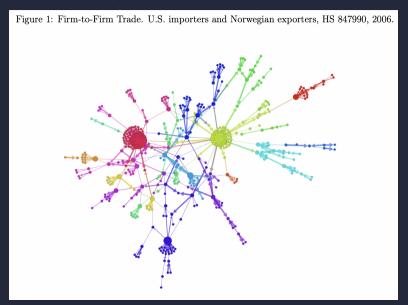


- Satellite data: "Unbiased" recording of (human) activity / conditions / environment
- Nightlight data: Where do people live / consume / produce?
- Other data: Gas emissions, ship and airplane movements, ...

### WEEK 9

# LARGE STRUCTURED DATA

- Trade not actually between countries, but firms in countries
- Bernard & Moxnes (2018): Vast majority of trade transactions includes at least one large firm with many trading partners
- Empirical regularities emphasizing firm heterogeneity among both buyers and suppliers



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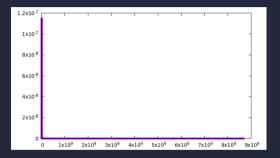
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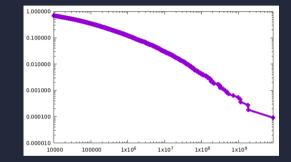
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#### Colombian firms' export value





Arithmetic scale

Log-log scale

# WEEK 10

## TEXT AS DATA

Large availability of unstructured text-data from

- websites such as Twitter, Facebook, Google, and Wikipedia
- historical archives and administrative records

#### Week 10: Trade Agreements as Text Data

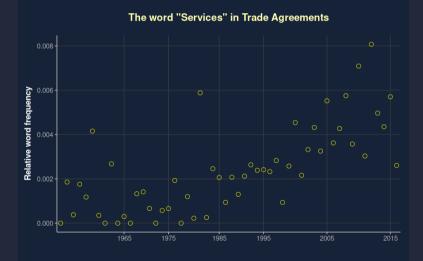
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#### Week 10: Trade Agreements as Text Data

WorldCloud of the document of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership



#### Week 10: Evolution of the content of Trade Agreements over time



- 1. How to process and extract info from text data
- 2. Applications:
  - 2.1 Measuring Policy Uncertainty from the News (Baker, Bloom et al. 2016)
  - 2.2 Defining competitive clusters by text descriptions of products (Hoberg and Phillips 2016)

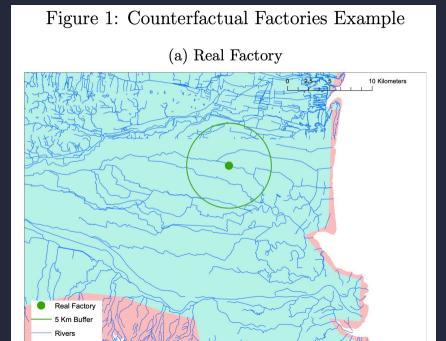
# WEEK 11

# OCR: DIGITIZED DATA

#### Week 11: OCR

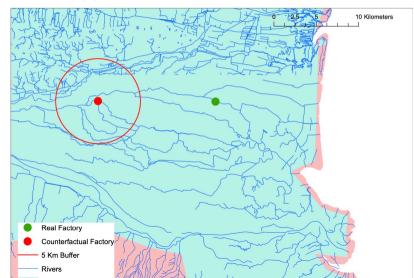
- Information (data) recorded for a long time
  - $\rightarrow~$  Clay tables, papyrus scrolls, ...
- How to get that information at scale?
  - $\rightarrow$  Optical character recognition
- Dell et al. (2020): "The Development Effects Of The Extractive Colonial Economy: The Dutch Cultivation System In Java"

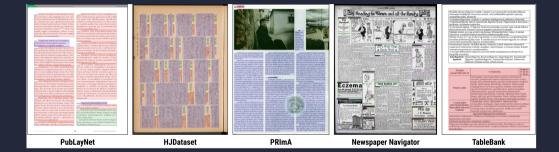
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# Figure 1: Counterfactual Factories Example

#### (b) Counterfactual Factory Suitability





# COURSE LOGISTICS

- Morning session: Introduction to topic and relevant paper(s)
- Afternoon session: Hands-on session with the data
  - $\rightarrow \text{ Live-coding}$

#### Coursework

#### Course project

- Choose a data (unconventional) dataset and either
  - Open access AWS data
- Replicate a paper or
- Test own hypothesis
- Final product: Report, website, visualizations... and presentation
- Twist: Git repository for all to see

#### Coursework

#### Course project

- Choose a data (unconventional) dataset and either
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- Website: datascience.julianhinz.com
- Slack: https://datascience2024.slack.com
- Lots of references on the website

# QUESTIONS?

# SUGGESTIONS?

# **GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE**

#### Session Roadmap

- Reproducibility
- Git and Github
- Docker
- ChatGPT & Co.
- Setting up your machines

# REPRODUCIBILITY

#### Reproducibility

- Mostly for your future self!
- but of course also: Science.

"Trying to replicate the estimates from an early draft of a paper, we discover that the code that produced the estimates no longer works because it calls files that have since been moved.

Now: No longer works."

"Between regressions number of observations falling. After much sleuthing, we find that many observations were dropped in a merge because they had missing values for the county identifier we were merging on. When we correct the mistake and include the dropped observations, the results change dramatically."

"Me and my coauthor write code that refers to a common set of data files stored on a shared folder. Our work is constantly interrupted because changes one of us makes to the data files causes the others' code to break."

### 8 building blocks of reproducibility

Code and Data in the Social Sciences (Gentzkow and Shapiro):

- 1. Automation
- 2. Version Control
- 3. Directories
- 4. Keys
- 5. Abstraction
- 6. Documentation
- 7. Management
- 8. Code Style

#### 1 — Automation

#### Automation

- 1. Automate everything that can be automated.
- 2. Write a single script that executes all code from beginning to end.

ightarrow Use a "master" file or, even better, use make

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 $\rightarrow$  Use a "master" file or, even better, use make

Version Control

- 1. Store code and data under version control.
- 2. Run the whole directory before checking it back in.

 $\rightarrow$  Use Git

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- 2. Run the whole directory before checking it back in.

 $\rightarrow \text{Use Git}$ 

### 3 — Directories

### Directories

- 1. Separate directories by function.
- 2. Separate files into inputs and outputs.
- 3. Make directories portable.

ightarrow Use <code>code</code> , <code>input</code> , <code>output</code> and <code>temp</code> folders

### 3 — Directories

### Directories

- 1. Separate directories by function.
- 2. Separate files into inputs and outputs.
- 3. Make directories portable.

 $\rightarrow$  Use code, input, output and temp folders

4 — Keys

Keys

- 1. Store cleaned data in tables with unique, non-missing keys.
- 2. Keep data normalized as far into your code pipeline as you can.

### 5 — Abstraction

### Abstraction

- 1. Abstract to eliminate redundancy.
- 2. Abstract to improve clarity.
- 3. Otherwise, don't abstract.

### 6 — Documentation

### Documentation

- 1. Don't write documentation you will not maintain.
- 2. Code should be self-documenting.

### 7 — Management

Management

- 1. Manage tasks with a task management system.
- 2. E-mail is not a task management system.

### 8 — Code Style

### Code Style

- 1. Keep it short and purposeful.
- 2. Use descriptive names.
- 3. Be consistent.
- 4. Profile slow code relentlessly.
- 5. Store "too much" output from slow code.
- 6. (Stick to style guide)

### Quick aside: Style guides

- Google: https://google.github.io/styleguide/Rguide.html
- tidyverse: https://style.tidyverse.org

# CHATGPT & CO.

### Introduction to LLMs: ChatGPT and GitHub Copilot

- Large Language Models (LLMs) are AI systems trained on massive text data
- ChatGPT: Powerful text generator, can be used for academic work
- GitHub Copilot: AI-based code generation, supports development tasks
- LLMs can improve productivity, but require caution in use
- Applications in data science, economic research, and academic writing

### Benefits of LLMs in Academic Work

- Rapid literature review and summarization
- Guided brainstorming and idea exploration
- Assisting with code development and debugging
- Drafting and editing academic papers or presentations
- Automating repetitive tasks, enabling focus on high-level analysis

### Cautions When Using LLMs

- Potential for biased or incorrect information
- Lack of understanding or context for complex topics
- Over-reliance may hinder critical thinking and originality
- Ethical concerns regarding data privacy and usage
- Proper citation and attribution to avoid plagiarism

### Best Practices for LLMs in Academic Work

- Cross-validate information with trusted sources
- Use LLMs as a complementary tool, not a substitute for expertise
- Engage in regular peer review for insights and feedback
- Be transparent about LLM usage in research and publications
- Stay updated on LLM advancements and ethical guidelines



 $\checkmark$ 

#### LLMs in Academic Work.

#### Model: GPT-4

MA

I need 4 slides to add to my lecture slide deck for the course "Data Science in International Economics". They should be about LLMs — and chatGPT and Github Copilot specifically — and how it can and should be used for academic work. Give examples where and how they help, and where one needs to be cautious. Write the slides in Latex, with no more than 5 bullet points each.



#### Slide 1

\begin{frame}

\frametitle{Introduction to LLMs: ChatGPT and GitHub Copilot}

#### \begin{itemize}

\item Large Language Models (LLMs) are AI systems trained on massive text data \item ChatGPT: Powerful text generator, can be used for academic work \item GitHub Copilot: AI-based code generation, supports development tasks



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#### LLMs in Academic Work.



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\end{frame}

Slide 2 \begin{frame} \frametitle{Benefits of LLMs in Academic Work}



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#### LLMs in Academic Work.

#### Slide 2

\begin{frame}

\frametitle{Benefits of LLMs in Academic Work}

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Slide 3 \begin{frame} \frametitle{Cautions When Using LLMs}



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#### LLMs in Academic Work.

Slide 3

\begin{frame}

\frametitle{Cautions When Using LLMs}

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Slide 4 \begin{frame} \frametitle{Best Practices for LLMs in Academic Work}



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# \end{frame} Slide 4 \begin{frame}

\frametitle{Best Practices for LLMs in Academic Work}

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LLMs in Academic Work.

#### \end{frame}

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# SETTING UP YOUR MACHINES

# Data Science for Economists

Julian Hinz & Irene lodice

**Bielefeld University**